Telegraph Operators' Penmanship

Signed

Donald McKicol

1942

TELEGRAPH OPERATORS' PENMANSHIP

Published by
DONALD McNICOL
253 Broadway, New York

The Book
Of telegraph penmanship
Containing prizewinning
Specimens Submitted in
Contests recently participated
in by railroad and
Commercial telegraphers.

"The moving finger writes
and having writ, moves on;
Nor all your piety nor
wit shall lure it back
to cancel half a line
Nor all your tears wash
out a word of it"

Foreword

IN May, 1917, Mr. Robert H. Davis, managing editor of the Munsey publications, New York, inaugurated in the *Railroad Man's Magazine* a telegraphers' penmanship contest to be participated in by operators in the railroad, commercial, and radio telegraph services.

The announcement as at first given out contemplated selecting from the samples submitted the five which, in the opinion of the judge of the contest, were deemed the most typically telegraphic.

Mr. Donald McNicol, of New York, was selected to act as judge.

The response to the announcement was so enthusiastic and so widespread that it was later decided to reproduce in the columns of the *Railroad Man's Magazine* the six most typically telegraphic specimens received each month over a period of three months.

During this time hundreds of specimens were received, samples coming from all sections of the United States, Canada, and from American radio operators at island ports scattered throughout the seven seas.

Certain rules were laid down for observance in making up specimens, such as the requirement that only black ink and a good grade of white, unlined paper be used; that the words written should consist of a specified text, and that the contestant's

name should be written on the reverse side of the sheet.

Failure to observe one or more of these rules resulted in the loss of place by many beautiful specimens.

In the main, the points observed in judging the winners were: alinement, pen control, speed possibilities, letter formation and artistic appearance.

Each of the eighteen winners in this contest was given a year's free subscription to the *Railroad Man's Magazine.*

Immediately after the termination of this contest requests were received from various parts of the country, asking that a contest be held for women telegraphers, and in March, 1918, the *Railroad Man's Magazine* announced that to the writers of the six best specimens of women telegraphers' penmanship received within sixty days a year's subscription to the magazine would be awarded.

The purpose of this little book is to preserve in permanent form the twenty-four specimens of telegraphers' penmanship which were awarded prizes in these two contests.

The hundreds of specimens received during the two contests, which were written on colored paper, on lined paper, in ink other than black, or in which slight defects occurred were, together with the originals of the prize winning copies, mounted in a scrapbook to be retained by the judge of the contests.

INTRODUCTION.

PRIOR to the advent of the typewriter legible and graceful penmanship was viewed as a personal accomplishment forming an important element of advanced education. Indeed, those who excelled in forming graceful lines and curves ranked as artists, with poets, painters and authors.

Benjamin Franklin once said that he owed what success he had attained to his ability to write legibly and rapidly.

When the late world war was started millions of young men forsook the haunts of the domestic typewriter, and, taking up military work in cantonment and field, soon found that one of the main performances expected of them by the folks at home was to keep up letter communication with those who remained behind. At first the product was of low grade, but already there are signs of improvement as a result of practice.

In March last year a Washington dispatch stated:

"Poor handwriting of men in military and naval service is largely responsible for a two weeks' delay in the distribution of government checks for

February pay allotment and family allowances to dependents."

Illegible addresses on the envelopes of millions of letters passing to and from the fighting zones have caused no end of delay and nondelivery of letters. The Post Office Department has repeatedly sent out appeals asking for greater care in pen writing.

Telegraphers, although they were among the first to adopt the typewriter to meet daily needs, have always attached importance to the ability to write well with pen and pencil. Two operators may be equally expert as senders and receivers, but if one of them can write a good telegraph hand and the other cannot, then the former is regarded as the better operator.

The highest compliment one operator can receive from another is that conveyed in the remark: "You write a copper-plate hand," or, "You write a pretty quill."

Walter P. Phillips, author of Phillips's Code, once stated that the Canadian telegraphers who migrated to the large telegraph centers in the Eastern States during the early days of the art, at once set the styles in the famous loops and curves which characterize that type of penmanship generally recognized as the "telegraph hand." Mr. Phillips has a legitimate claim to high standing as an authority, for in the heyday

of his youth he was awarded a valuable gold pen by Professor Morse for having copied in a beautiful hand a record number of words from the wire in a given time. As Mr. Phillips himself has quoted, the penmanship of an expert telegrapher is "a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

If you inquire of an operator regarding the ability of another operator to write well, the reply is likely to be: "Oh, yes; he can draw pictures," or in case the man inquired about is not a good penman, the statement may be forthcoming that "he writes a rotten fist." An operator who uses a stub pen and writes a heavy hand is said to "put it on with a broom." Telegraphers who have been capable of producing a "gilt-edged copy," and who later in life have entered other pursuits, always take pride in their penmanship, and it is with pardonable conceit that they never designedly miss an opportunity to display their graceful chirography.

In every town and city of any consequence between Sandy Hook and Cliff House one may today see that attractive legend, "Do you ever stop to consider," et cetera, engrossed on plate glass windows, the original of which was written by a vice-president of one of the large telegraph compaines in a strong, legible hand, typically telegraphic.

Telegraphic penmanship is not taught in schools

Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Louisville Telegraph.

CINCINNATI OFFICE—COLLEGE HALL—THIRD STORY.

All Communications strictly confidential.

☞ To make the Telegraph efficient, the public must be the conservators of its own interests, and should make known every cause of reasonable complaint at once to the Manager, Trustees, or Superintendent. All such will be investigated promptly.

Business men, whose offices close early, and all who have anything to do with the Telegraph, are earnestly requested to leave full addresses of residence and occupation, so that the delivery of despatches can be secured with certainty and without delay.

All messages must be pre-paid, save where answers have been arranged, to be paid for on delivery, and of which previous notice should be given.

The following communication, dated Philadelphia
was received at this office at 9 o'clock 50 minutes A M.,
Nov 28 1848

Mr Thos Kite

Send word when you will start. We daily look anxiously

Edith Kile

or colleges. Its characteristics are not Spencerian. To the lay eye all telegraph hands look alike, but to the initiated there are many variations of form and style.

During the twenty years after 1845, when the telegraph was introduced commercially, telegraph penmanship as we know it today did not exist. The specimen reproduced herein, of a telegram copied by an operator in the year 1848, is typical of the writing of telegraphers of that period.

Commencing about 1865, however, it would appear that some telegrapher with an artistic bent developed a style of penmanship at once plain and rapid and rounded out in lines pleasing to the eye. The looping of words and the smooth, graceful lines favored resembled the penmanship of the professional scriveners in Great Britain and the Continent who thrived during the seventeenth and eighteenth conturies. The penmanship of the professional letter writer, while beautiful, was not necessarily rapid. The telegrapher was always under the necessity of writing rapidly.

It may well be imagined what "rapidly" meant when train orders had to be copied at a rate of thirty-five to forty words per minute, and when commercial telegrams had to be copied in readable lines from senders who made no allowances of time for such purely local operations as dotting "i's,"

New York. April 18. 1898.

Dear friend Taltavall,

It is quite true that I have thought of returning to Scotland, and that I now await conditions which will be settled in the coming month. Any desire to return to my native land, however, seems only to strengthen my love for this. Sixty years of residence, and labor, & friendships, have made America very dear to me. My final rest will be in no land but this. For that provision has already been made. I shall be gathered among my own.

Yours very Sincerely.

Wm. D. Reid.

crossing "t's," dipping ink, blotting finished copies, adding in service marks, reaching for service forms, et cetera.

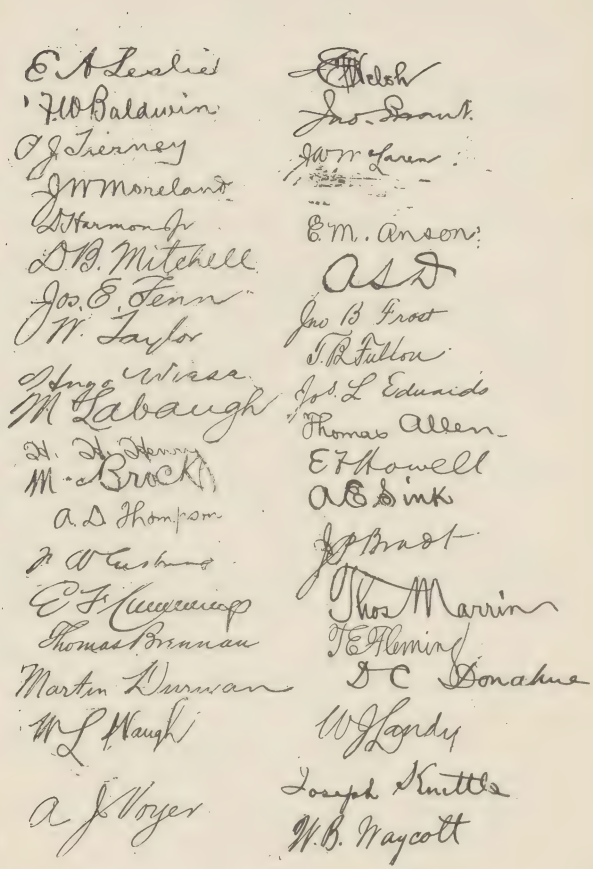
Most people can write their best when they write slowly and carefully, but a good telegraph operator generally writes more gracefully at thirty-five words per minute than at fifteen words per minute.

James D. Reid, the first superintendent in America of a commercial telegraph company, wrote a hand which has been regarded as a model of neatness. A specimen of Mr. Reid's penmanship is reproduced on another page.

That period in American telegraph history, frequently referred to as "the day of the good pen copy," if it can be defined at all, might be said to have been during the eighties and nineties of the past century.

While it is true that a group of signatures does not make as pretty a picture as a page of one style of writing, the signature group reproduced herewith illustrates the signatures of thirty-seven telegraphers employed in New York in the year 1881. The penmanship of several of these men was noted for its plainness and beauty.

Mr. Edison was employed as an operator from 1863 until 1869, a period of about six years. According to report, he developed into a first-class operator very soon after learning the business.



I consider the Electrical Engineer Institute as conducted by Messrs Wetzler and Martin to be of great value to those who desire an Electrical education

Thomas A Edison

A specimen of his penmanship is reproduced herewith. It is not a typical telegraph hand, and very likely was written with a minimum of wrist and elbow movement, excepting when making flourishes at the end of a word.

It is a singular fact that only rarely has an operator in practice attempted to copy Mr. Edison's style of penmanship. It is a beautiful and a legible hand, but there are not many who could learn to write it at a fast enough clip.

Of course, the typewriter is at the present time universally employed in receiving messages from the wire, and due to this a condition has grown up wherein it is conceded that a man now may be a first-class telegrapher without being able to "sling the ink" in graceful lines. It is true, however, that every telegrapher who aims to be known as a "star" realizes that a plain, rapid penmanship is essential.

It is no uncommon sight in a large operating room to see a number of operators grouped around a message hook upon which is hung, awaiting transmission, a message written by hand by a new recruit from the bush league who knows how to "put it down in style." A group of artists viewing a Meissonier or a Blakelock, could not voice homage more appreciative of their masters than is offered by the telegraph cub to those of the craft who can produce "copper-plate" copy.

Sam.l F.B. Morse.

TELEGRAMS, CLAREMORE.
STATION, BONAR BRIDGE.

June 9 1902

SKIBO CASTLE,
ARDGAY,
N.B.

Hearty Congratulations
My Dear Mr McClintic
upon your great victory
Am glad it's a Mc. that
won the Medal, Much
be Scotch blood in the
victor - "73 4

Yours always
Andrew Carnegie

It has often been stated that the first operators adopted a style of penmanship resembling that of Professor Morse, and that from this was evolved the typical telegraph hand with which we are familiar. The specimen of Morse's handwriting herewith reproduced differs markedly from the average school or business hand, but it is evident that Morse did not write with the free-elbow movement necessary in producing the large capital letters and flowing tail-pieces affected by later operators.

Mr. Carnegie got his start in life in the telegraph business, but he did not remain in it long enough to acquire a typical telegraph style of penmanship. The specimen of his writing illustrated, however, indicates that he could write plainly and rapidly. The small "g" and small "d" are the only letters resembling the fast operator's hand.

The reproduction is that of a letter Mr. Carnegie wrote to F. M. McClintic, at the time Mr. McClintic won the Carnegie diamond medal for fast sending at the Atlanta telegraph tournament in the year 1902.

The copy of a Christmas greetings message reproduced herewith was written in 1917 by C. L. Johnson, a Canadian telegrapher, and is presented here to point out that some operators have effected a pleasing combination of the Spencerian and telegraph styles of penmanship.

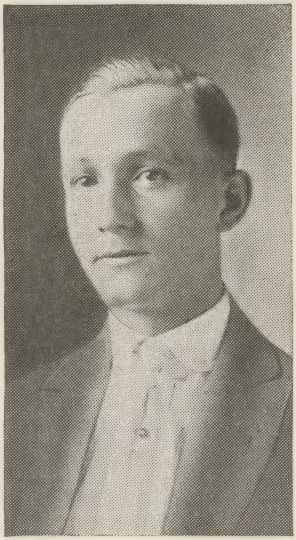
J. McMILLAN
Manager,
Montreal

The following Message is subject to the terms printed on the back hereof

XMS 71 Toronto Ont Dec 25/17

The Readers'
The Telegraph and Telephone Age'
253 Broadway New York N Y

Wishing you the Compliments
of the Season,
Canadian Pacific
Telegraph Staff



BENJ. H. TIDRICK

This is a specimen of telegraphers penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Mana Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen.

WINNERS IN PENMANSHIP CONTEST.

IN the following pages are reproduced the twenty-four specimens selected as winners from the many hundreds of samples submitted.

On the opposite page is the copy sent in by Benjamin H. Tidrick, at that time repeaterman for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company at Davenport, Iowa, and now with the same interests at Indianapolis, Ind.

Mr. Tidrick's entry won a place because it counted high in points, showing speed, pen-control, alinement, graceful lines, and distinct letter formation.

One of the principal advantages of this type of penmanship is that it permits of copying a large number of words on one message form, and neat copy may be turned out on unlined paper.

Mr. Tidrick learned to telegraph—and to write—within the past twelve years. He is, therefore, a living refutation of the claim sometimes made that operators nowadays do not learn how to write well.

It may be noted that the words decided upon for the text to be used, consisting as they do of words begininng with lower case letters and, in the same lines, some with capitals, do not lend themselves particularly to attractive formations. Mr. Tidrick, however, overcame this handicap very neatly by not making the capital letters too large.

This is a specimen of telegraphers' penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen

ON the opposite page appears a reproduction of the penmanship sample submitted by Robert I. Flowers. In pen-control, alinement, and letter formation this is first-class telegraph copy.

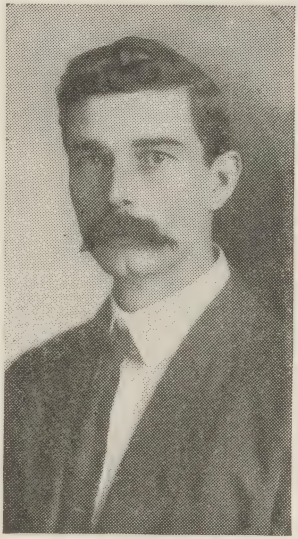
According to the deductions of the graphologists and handwriting experts this type of penmanship denotes the possesison of the virtues of creative power and sagacity.

Since this specimen was written we have seen several pages of pen-written matter turned out by Mr. Flowers, all of it done in the same artistic lines here portrayed. It should be needless to remind the reader that the original copies are clearer and smoother than the reproductions. In the process of making the cuts for printing it is unavoidable that something of the beauty of the original copy is lost.

Mr. Flowers was born in Kansas City, Mo., in 1890. He became a telegrapher at the early age of fourteen years, since which time he has worked every kind of commercial, railroad, and press circuit, at points throughout the central states.

During the late military activity Mr. Flowers was in the national military service.

ROBERT I. FLOWERS



HARRY H. ALLEN

This is a Specimen of
Telegraph penmanship Submitted to the
Editor of the Telegraph and
Telephone department of the Railroad
Mans Magazine in the year
Nineteen hundred and Seventeen

THE specimen sent in by Harry H. Allen appears on the opposite page. Mr. Allen's entry represents a typically telegraphic hand, and from the standpoint of speed possibilities stood high among the winners.

This copy bears unmistakable earmarks of rapid penning. It is plain that when Mr. Allen is writing with a pen he has in his mind an image of exactly how each word will appear on the paper before he has commenced actually to form it. The brain process involved is: first, the word to be written; next, a mental picture of how the word should appear on the paper, and then the ability to exactly reproduce that picture. The reproduction of Mr. Allen's copy here shown indicates that he can execute his ideas at a very rapid rate. The word "the," for instance, which appears four times in the text, is in each instance written identically, even to the crossing of the "t."

Like several of the others in the winners' column, Mr. Allen learned to telegraph, and to write, many years after the so-called days of the good pen copy. He has been a telegrapher since 1896, and has worked in several of the large commercial telegraph offices in the south. At the present time he is in the service of the Western Union Telegraph Company at Gainesville, Fla.

This is a specimen of telegraphers penmanship submitted to the Editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Mans Magazine in the Year Nineteen hundred and Seventeen

THE specimen of handwriting reproduced on the opposite page is that of L. M. McCormick. It is an excellent specimen of the light pen-pressure, rapid hand seen in telegraph offices throughout the south and southwest. Observe that each letter of each word has a separate and distinct existence.

Mr. McCormick is manager of the Western Union Telegraph Company's office at Gainesville, Fla. The close resemblance between this copy and that of Mr. Allen, employed in the same office, is striking. Both of these gentlemen have the same mental picture of how written words should appear; their styles of penmanship are practically identical. In Mr. Allen's copy it may be noted that the lower case "e" and "s" are, perhaps, preferable to the same letters in Mr. McCormick's copy. The photographic reduction, however, makes these letters appear smaller than they are in the original copy.

Mr. McCormick started in the telegraph business as a messenger, and within a year or so became a good telegrapher. He has worked the most important commercial, press, and cable circuits in the cities of Atlanta, Jacksonville and Savannah. For a period of three years he worked the Havana side of the Cuban cable, copying from four hundred to five hundred cablegrams per day by pen.

This is a specimen of telegraphers' penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen

THE penmanship copy of W. W. Spafford, reproduced on the opposite page, is a typical telegraph hand that contains certain characteristics in common with other prize winning specimens herein reproduced.

For ten years Mr. Spafford worked on one circuit in the Board of Trade telegraph office, Chicago, that was the Postal Telegraph Company's Exchange wire to Minneapolis. During this period he used either pen or pencil, according to the nature of the traffic, and on many occasions copied at the rate of one hundred messages per hour.

Mr. Spafford entered the telegraph business in the year 1890, about the time the typewriter was generally introduced in the telegraph service, but he realized that the ability to write a good hand had advantages that the use of the typewriter would not nullify. He relates that in the small Ohio town where he learned to telegraph, one day he found in a side-tracked box car a bundle of tissue copies of received telegrams, all of which had been copied in some large office by operators using pen and ink. Six months' industrious practice in duplicating as nearly as practicable the penmanship of the unknown masters, resulted in the development of the fine composite telegraph copy which Mr. Spafford writes today, and which during the past twenty years has kept him numbered among the best of Chicago's telegraphers.

This is a Specimen of Telegraphers
penmanship submitted to the Editor of
the Telegraph and Telephone Department
of the Railroad Mans Magazine
in the Year Nineteen Hundred and
Seventeen

THE penmanship of C. Percy, telegrapher in the service of the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company at Big Springs, Tex., is shown on the opposite page. This also is a typical telegraph hand. In general lines it resembles that of Mr. McCormick, but close inspection shows some difference in detail of letter formation. The pen-pressure is stronger and the letters are somewhat larger. The word "year," as written by Messrs. Allen, McCormick and Percy is almost identical in formation, and it is plain that each of these gentlemen can write that word at a rapid clip; so rapidly, in fact, that each of them has time to add a tail to the last letter of the word. In one or two instances Mr. Percy carries the tailing too far, and this, in a sense, detracts from the appearance of his copy.

On the railroad lines throughout the western states there are today many telegraphers, especially at terminal, relay, and dispatcher's offices, who can turn out copy of this same order. It is rapid, each letter in its place, and is easy to read.

This is a specimen of telegraphers penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Mans' Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen.

THE sample sent in by R. M. Butler is reproduced on the opposite page. A study of Mr. Butler's penmanship throws light upon why he has worked in the central cable office of the Western Union Telegraph Company, New York. Each letter of the text was formed to represent exactly what was intended; not a particle of doubt exists as to the spelling of any of the words.

Even where the pen is not always used in copying from the wire, the mind which has a proper understanding of the value of accuracy and exactness instinctively influences the production of clear and unmistakable copy whenever the pen or pencil is used.

The roundness of the lower case letters in Mr. Butler's copy denotes very rapid formation; the letters "m" and "n" clearly were made at a high rate of speed. The loops between words do not drop low, and are resorted to only where there is an apparent saving in time in reaching the next word. The writer evidently prefers to separate the words unless something is to be gained in appearance or in speed by hooking them together.

During the late war Mr. Butler, like many other first class telegraphers, was engaged in the national service.

I succeeded in making a living putting 5 on a Line with this "Operators Fist" In the days gone by. If it were to finish "in the money" in this contest I would be both gratified and surprised

COPY of E. R. Wakefield: In submitting his entry Mr. Wakefield did not follow the rules laid down as to text to be used, but this was owing to a misunderstanding on his part. The copy he forwarded is so good, however, that it was decided to pass it as a typical specimen of telegraphers' penmanship.

This copy differs considerably from the others so far presented, and yet it is typically telegraphic. An operator writing a hand like this would have a hard time keeping out of the railroad or telegraph service.

It is of the stub-pen type of backhand writing at one time very popular in commercial telegraph offices. It is easy to read, and as one man said who saw the original of this specimen: "If everyone who had to write had been able to turn out copy like this, the inventor of the typewriter would have encountered discouragement hard to overcome." Note that no loops are made between the words, and only in one instance is the pen allowed to go "around twice" in making a letter "o."

Like all good penmen, Mr. Wakefield acquired his style only after several years of assiduous practice. His vision of the perfect type of handwriting pictured copy devoid of flourishes, loops, or anything at all in the way of extra lines or curves. That he succeeded in developing his idea is clearly evidenced in the fine, strong hand here reproduced.

This is a specimen of Telegraphers' penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen.

ON the opposite page appears a reproduction of the penmanship entry submitted by E. M. Shaler of the Union Pacific Railroad Company at Cheyenne, Wyo.

This is a hand typically telegraphic without looping the words together. Its strongest feature is the definite formation of the individual letters. The letters "m," "n" and "g," all are excellent. In this specimen it is possible that the frequent use of the capital "E" results in a sacrifice of speed, although as here formed it is very well proportioned. The spacing of the words and alinement are excellent.

The formation of the words "specimen," "nineteen," and "seventeen" undoubtedly is typical of the style of penmanship Mr. Shaler has in mind while he is copying. Each letter of each word has a distinct and separate existence, and there is no mistaking what is intended.

Operators who write hands closely resembling this specimen in outline often support the pen between the index and second fingers, instead of between the thumb and index finger. This pen-grip points the holder away from the body, the pen point being drawn in the direction of the writing along the paper.

A train order written in this fine, clear hand leaves nothing to be guessed at: Podunk is Podunk, and not Pohinik.

This is a Specimen of Telegraphers penmanship Submitted to the Editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Mans Magazine in the Year Nineteen Hundred and Seventeen.

THE writing of a first class telegrapher when he leaves the key to take up freight office clerical duties, such as way-billing, etc., generally develops into larger letters and wider spacings. The penmanship of C. P. Dickson, reproduced on the opposite page, is one of several sent in during the contest which bear these characteristics.

The type retains most of the elegant lines of the telegraph hand; is very fast and is easy to read.

A remarkable feature of telegraphers' penmanship is the ability of the writers to vary the letter and word combinations while at the same time maintaining a uniform appearance of copy. A case in point is the varying form of the letter "e." In Mr. Dickson's specimen it may be noted that in forming the word "Telegraph" the capital "T" is made separate from the rest of the word and that both letters "e" are lower case; while in the word "Telephone" the capital "T" is joined to the body of the word and one capital "E" and one small "e" are used in making up the word. The same is true of the make-up of the word "Department." This characteristic of the telegraph hand is the result of the writer's desire in any given case to employ the form of letter which will look the neatest and which can be made the quickest. These two ideas combined form the telegrapher's first law of penmanship.

Mr. Dickson is in the railroad service at Raleigh, N. C.

This is a specimen of
telegraphers' penmanship
submitted to the editor
of the Telegraph and Telephone
Department of the Railroad
Man's Magazine in the year
nineteen hundred and seventeen.

HARVEY G. GROFE, the writer of the specimen presented on the opposite page, is a pen artist who can turn out page upon page of copy at a clip that equals the performance of any of the ink-slingers of the days before the typewriter. Every line of his copy denotes speed. When he starts a word there is no hesitation until that word and perhaps the next and the next to that are completed. The formation of the letter "a" in the word "telegraph" tells its own story to the telegraph scribe.

Mr. Grofe does not just happen to be a good penman; he is one by dint of long practice. He is a penmanship fan, and has collected a scrapbook which now contains many beautiful specimens of operators' "Fist."

He is employed in the service of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad at Boyertown, Pa., and has had many years' experience in the telegraph service, both commercial and railroad.

This is a specimen of telegraphers penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Mans Magazine in the year nineteen hundred seventeen

EVERYONE knows that an operator has no mercy upon a train dispatcher when it comes to repeating back train-orders. F. R. Plunkett, the writer of the specimen reproduced on the opposite page, is employed as a train dispatcher on a Canadian railroad. At the time this was written he was located at Fort William, Ontario.

The cultivation of the "reverse curve" in forming the letter "h" has in years gone by kept many an operator awake on his job when otherwise, perhaps, he might have been engaged in coloring a meerschaum pipe or in trying to play a ukelele.

In the words "penmanship" and "telephone," Mr. Plunkett presents excellent examples of the reverse curve "h," and his copy on the whole is typical of the type of writing which may be seen in train dispatchers' order books at terminal offices on railroads throughout western Canada.

This is a specimen of telegraphe's penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen.

B. J. DODGE, the writer of the specimen of telegraphers' handwriting which appears on the opposite page is employed in the telegraph service of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the railroad which during the past thirty years has been the stamping ground of more first class telegraphers than any other road in the country.

Mr. Dodge's entry is notable for its speed possibilities and its readability. It is not what would be regarded as an ideal telegraph hand, but it shows the possibilities of transforming the Spencerian type of penmanship into a serviceable telegraph hand. Other specimens of Mr. Dodge's writing which we have seen were penned in heavier and stronger lines than the sample here reproduced, the effect of which is to make the copy appear less of the light pen-pressure, slanting Spencerian type.

The same letter formation here used would appear to better advantage if the letters were arranged more on the vertical. This, of course, so far as Mr. Dodge is concerned, would very likely result in reduced speed.

This is a specimen of telegraphers' penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen

THE specimen presented on the opposite page was written by Earl C. Thompson, employed as telegrapher in the service of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Indianapolis, Ind.

This is a good, average railway hand, with room for improvement, improvement that will undoubtedly come with practice.

As a type it suggests on the part of the writer unusual freedom of arm movement. Mr. Thompson undoubtedly forms his letters very rapidly; the words "submitted," "man's," and "magazine" could not have the smooth, graceful appearance they have here if made slowly and deliberately.

Mr. Thompson's product is another example of the reward of effort. His father taught penmanship when he was a young man, and the son, during his school days, had a teacher who regarded penmanship as one of the most important subjects. In school he acquired the free elbow movement, so that when he became a telegrapher all he had to do was select a style of telegraph hand to cultivate. His entry shows that he is making good progress.

This is a specimen of telegraphers'
penmanship submitted to the editor of
the Telegraph and Telephone Dept.
of the Railroad Man's Magazine
in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen.

THE penmanship of P. S. Pender, here illustrated, is typically telegraphic. Undoubtedly Mr. Pender can write very rapidly. In this copy the letter "l" in "telegraph" and "telephone," would look better and would make the words more readable if it were made higher.

In this specimen appear two characteristics of the telegraph hand which have been widely used but which could be abandoned with resultant gain in appearance: these are the "circle" dot over the letter "i," and the "stork" "d," as in the word "editor." In each instance the writer uses this form of "d."

The custom of looping words together, where the loop has a considerable drop, brands almost any type of good penmanship as telegraphic, but the deep loop employed by telegraph operators is rarely used by penmen in other professions.

Mr. Pender has had considerable experience as an operator, but is still a comparative youngster. He is located at Granite City, Ill.

This is a specimen of telegraphers penmanship
Submitted to the Editor of the Telegraph and
Telephone department of the Railroad Man's
Magazine in the year nineteen hundred
and seventeen.

THE penmanship specimen reproduced on the opposite page was submitted by Eugene Dyer, employed as manager of the Western Union Telegraph Company at Lafayette, Ind.

This copy is typical of the penmanship of the old-timer telegraphers who could copy fifty commercial telegrams per hour all day long with a pen. Every line and curve bespeaks speed.

Mr. Dyer was the only old-timer who submitted an entry in either of the penmanship contests.

It was the understanding that in writing specimens for entry in the contest the contestant was to write at regulation "wire" speed. Mr. Dyer loosened up and copied at a clip that equalled his speed with the stylus in the early days when he copied Associated Press from such senders as Patsy Ayers, Tom Taltavall, Clohesy, Church and other lightning senders on the press circuits during the late seventies and early eighties of the past century.

In letter formation this copy is not so clear as that of the present day train-order telegrapher, but in appearance it is very uniform and its high speed is unquestionable.

This is a specimen of telegrapher's penmanship submitted to the Editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year Nineteen Hundred and Seventeen.

COPY of W. E. Shelton of East Cleveland, Ohio: In some respects Mr. Shelton's specimen is not as clean-cut or as graceful as some of the other copies herein reproduced; but it is plain that the underlying thought in the mind of the writer is to produce readable copy, free from unnecessary flourishes. Train conductors and enginemen who receive telegraphic orders written by Mr. Shelton are not, we venture to say, in doubt as to where they are to meet that ever existent "Extra West."

A study of all hands of this same general type brings the conviction that in the minds of telegraphers there is a common idea as to just how the ideal copy should appear. Variations in the detail of letter shapes, word formations, etc., very likely are the result of ability or inability physically to reproduce on paper the forms visualized.

Some of the words in this sample are excellent, such as "submitted," and "the." Others are not so good—the "M's," for instance, are stiff and ungainly, and were not made with the same swing and ease as was the word "seventeen."

This is a specimen of telegraphers penmanship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen.

RADIO telegraph operators employed at stations where the traffic is heavy, and where telephone receivers are used to receive the Morse signals, as a usual thing are not able to use the typewriter to the same extent as their land line brothers. In radio work plain and rapid penmanship is a very desirable qualification.

The penmanship of W. B. Ford, employed in the big radio station maintained by the United States Navy at Annapolis, Md., is illustrated on the opposite page.

Mr. Ford, before entering the radio service, had had several years' experience as a land line, commercial telegrapher, which undoubtedly accounts for his ability to write a plain and fast telegraph hand.

In this copy there is a total absence of flourish and of unnecessary lines.

The great advance being made in radio signaling, with a consequent increase in the number of stations being operated, will very soon bring to the fore the question of improving the appearance of the received radiogram. Radio operators will, in all probability, adopt styles of penmanship identical with those found serviceable by land line commercial and railroad scribes.

This is a specimen of penmanship
written by a woman telegrapher and
submitted to the Editor of the
Telegraph and Telephone Department of the
Railroad Trans Magazine in the year
Nineteen hundred Eighteen

THE following six specimens of telegraph penmanship are those selected from the entries submitted in the Women Operators' Contest conducted during the latter part of the year 1918.

On the opposite page appears the specimen forwarded by Miss Laura Ecker. When the original copy reached New York and was handed to the judge of the contest, his first remark was: "The girl does not live who can write a hand as typically telegraphic and as beautiful as that."

Miss Ecker is employed in the man office of the Postal Telegraph-Cable Company at Kansas City, Mo., and in that office has worked the Chicago bonus circuit and the heavy Oklahoma City local. The receipt of this information from Chief Operator B. W. Fields of the Kansas City office removed the judge's doubts and landed Miss Ecker's copy in first position.

Although there are a great many women telegraphers who can write fine telegraph hands, it is rarely that a woman operator is artist enough to cultivate and perfect the graceful curves which in this copy follow the formation of the word "of." The words "specimen," and "telegraph" are excellent, as also is the looped "y" in the word "year."

This is a specimen of penmanship written by a woman telegrapher and submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen.

THE copy appearing on the opposite page is that of Miss Lucille Smythe of the Oregon-Washington Railway and Navigation Company at Starbuck, Wash.

As was the case in the men's contest, the south and the west appear to contain the majority of the fine writers. The sample forwarded by Miss Smythe is a type of penmanship not often seen nowadays, but which at one time was a favorite style with terminal-office telegraphers who copied train orders all day long—or all night long.

Miss Smythe can write practically as well with her left as with her right hand.

Some operators may claim that this cannot be written rapidly; but the fact that Miss Smythe works a heavy terminal-office position means that conductors and engineers on the O.-W. R. and N. daily carry in their vest pockets flimsies copied at high speed and engrossed in this artistic chirography by Miss Smythe.

This is a specimen of penmanship written by a woman Telegrapher and submitted to the editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Man's Magazine in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen

ON the opposite page appears a reproduction of the penmanship specimen submitted in the contest by Mrs. Addie Phillips, employed as operator in the service of the Western Union Telegraph Company at Jacksonville, Fla.

This copy is delicate, artistic, plain and telegraphic. It is of a style similar to the upright or vertical penmanship taught in the public schools ten years ago. The practice, however, of forming words or disjointed letters distinguishes this specimen from the class-room hand, and is a variation which aims at clearness. Mrs. Phillips gives each letter of every word a place of its own, a type of penmanship which imposes upon the writer the necessity of accurate spelling. The capital "T," the round "o," and the small "s," are typically telegraphic.

This is a comparatively easy hand for women telegraphers to learn, and although it may not be so rapid as that of Miss Ecker, it is plainly superior to many slanting hands used in correspondence and which leave a good deal to be desired in the way of clearness.

This is a specimen of penmanship
written by a woman telegrapher
and submitted to the editor of the
Telegraph and Telephone Department
of the Railroad Mans Magazine
Nineteen hundred and eighteen.

MRS. BEN B. WEBSTER of the Western Union, Chicago, submitted the specimen reproduced on the opposite page. In every line and curve this sample denotes Mrs. Webster's ability to write at high speed. Old-time operators who have studied the art of telegraph chirography will decide that this lady very likely holds her pen "woman fashion," that is, with the handle pointing away from the writer.

Mrs. Webster has spent her entire telegraph career in "CH" office, Chicago. She is proud of her vocation and gets genuine pleasure in doing good work.

This is another copy devoid of flourishes and needless lines. The formation of the words "written," and "Telegraph" brand this type of penmanship as genuinely telegraphic. One of its most valuable characteristics is that with it a large number of words may be written on one message form and still permit of producing readable copy.

This is a specimen of penmanship written by a woman telegrapher and submitted to the Editor of the Telegraph and Telephone Department of the Railroad Mans Magazine in the year Nineteen hundred and Eighteen

THE specimen here illustrated was written by Mrs. E. M. Coats, telegrapher located at Schatz, Mont., and who is employed at Blossburg, Mont., a Northern Pacific Railroad station near the continental divide. The specimen is of a type at once plain and rapid, and one that chief dispatchers could well recommend to women student telegraphers. It is an easy hand to acquire and, when once mastered, enables an operator to keep close up to the sending operator and to catch up with the sender when, for any reason, the copier has made a slow start.

The light pen-pressure used by the writer permits of rapid letter and word formation and of penning a large number of words with one dip of ink.

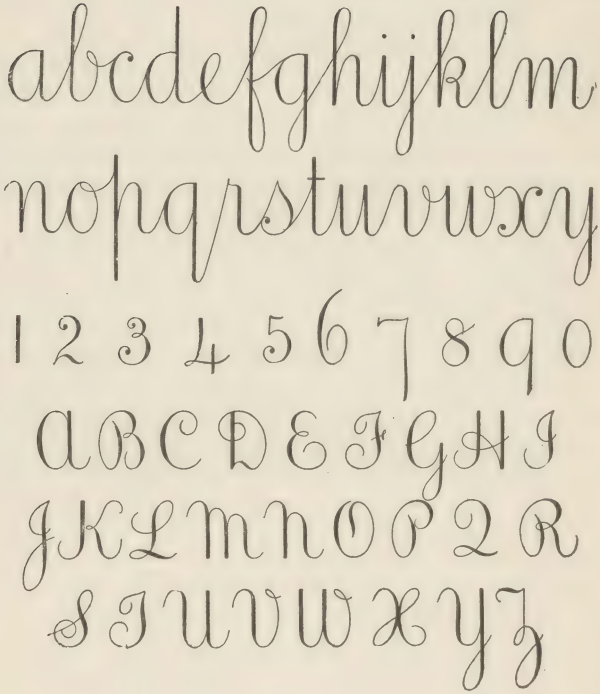
Mrs. Coats' copy bears unmistakable feminine characteristics, but it shows how easily the typical "school girl" writing may be transformed into a serviceable and speedy hand for commercial purposes. The words "the," "and," and "of" are similar in appearance to the style of writing adopted generally by women for correspondence purposes, but the words "specimen," and "telegrapher" contain telegraphic characteristics acquired as a result of the necessity for rapid penning in order to keep up with the sending operator.

This is a specimen of
penmanship written by a
woman Telegrapher and
submitted to the Editar of
the Telegraph and Telephone
department of the Railroad
Man's Magazine in the year
Nineteen hundred and Eighteen

EDITH (Dot) Dizney of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, and one of the most popular women telegraphers south of the Mason and Dixon's line, sent in the specimen shown on the opposite page.

Miss Dizney's style of penmanship is original; it is in a class by itself. Until the penmanship contest was started and some of the fine specimens were reproduced in the *Railroad Man's Magazine,* Miss Dizney had never seen any fine writing done by women telegraphers.

She has been and still is employed in an important terminal telegraph office on the L. and N. Railroad, where she works with two sets of train dispatchers, and the engineers on the road testify to the statement that when they receive telegraph orders written by stylus in this solid appearing hand they dismiss all fear of misunderstanding.



SINCE the telegraph style of penmanship became a recognized reality there have been a few attempts made to prepare copy-book instructions with the object of providing a method whereby anyone might learn how to write in lines similar to those used by telegraph operators in copying telegrams.

So far as the writer is aware, none of these attempts has succeeded. The lack of success may be accounted for by the fact that rarely do two operators write exactly alike; each man's copy contains individual characteristics which distinguish it from other copy which at first inspection may appear to be identical.

Some years ago, F. T. Viles, a well-known Boston expert telegrapher, prepared for practice purposes the upper and lower case letters and the figures which are reproduced on the opposite page. The idea was to present standardized forms, devoid of flourishes or unnecessary lines, which when thoroughly mastered would enable the student gradually to cultivate a style of penmanship that would exhibit telegraphic characteristics. The specimen letters and figures here shown are recommended as to form only; they may be made smaller, and may be given a slight slant either to the right or the left. Constant practice at duplicating these perfectly plain letters should make it possible for any young telegrapher to improve his penmanship.

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IS THE

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